

BACA NAMES NEW JAILS^{LA} CHIEF^{Times}

WED 3-20-17

Former state prison official takes helm as federal agents look into more allegations of deputy violence.

By ROBERT FATURECHI

As the FBI broadened its probe into violence in the L.A. County jails, Sheriff Lee Baca this week brought in an outsider with a reform background to run the troubled lockups.

Baca's decision to hire Terri McDonald to manage the nation's largest jail system marks a major milestone in his reform effort, which was sparked by the federal investigation into allegations that jailers beat inmates and visitors.

McDonald, who started Monday, left her post with the state prison system to oversee Baca's jails, where her annual salary is \$223,087. Sheriff's officials say her reputation as a tough manager who helped reform the prisons makes her a good fit for the jails post.

At the prisons, McDonald most recently helped oversee realignment, the process of keeping thousands of would-be state prisoners in local county jails. She's also been noted for helping to improve training for prison guards.

McDonald this week acknowledged the daunting challenges the Sheriff's Department faces as she starts her tenure, but put a positive spin on it: "It is exciting times for this organization, and I'm proud and honored to be part of the leadership team moving the organization forward."

She endorsed the reforms recommended by a blue-ribbon panel examining jail violence, saying she was particularly pleased with efforts to strengthen deputy training.

Baca said his pick would be "bringing a great amount of wisdom into the system."

McDonald's hiring comes as the FBI continues to press ahead with its investigation into jail violence. The probe has been underway for at least 1½ years.

So far, federal authorities have secured a bribery conviction against one deputy, but the probe continues. Sources with knowledge of the federal investigation say it recently has expanded to include two new cases in which deputies allegedly took part in unprovoked beatings.

One case involves a jail-house visitor who says deputies broke his arm after he asked to speak with a supervisor, and the other centers on a top sheriff's recruit who resigned weeks into the job, alleging that his boss made him beat up a mentally ill in-

[See Jails, A12]

Ex-prison official to oversee jails

[Jails, from A1]
mate, the sources said.

The two new cases provide further evidence that federal authorities are trying to build cases using witnesses other than jail inmates, who often have credibility problems in court. Federal investigators have tried to overcome that hurdle by securing recordings, internal documents and interviews with civilian jail monitors and officials within the sheriff's own ranks.

Federal authorities have remained tight-lipped about the jails probe, but a source close to the case who asked to remain anonymous said agents are investigating allegations made by the rookie deputy, a case detailed by The Times. In that incident, the young deputy who graduated at the top of his recruit class resigned after only a few weeks on the job, alleging that a Twin Towers jail supervisor made him beat up a mentally ill inmate. The deputy, Joshua Sather, said that shortly before the inmate's beating, his supervisor said, "We're gonna go in and teach this guy a lesson," according to records. The attack, Sather said, was then covered up.

After the incident, the muscled, tattooed rookie called his uncle — a veteran sheriff's gang detective — crying and distraught. He abruptly resigned soon af-

ter, citing "family issues."

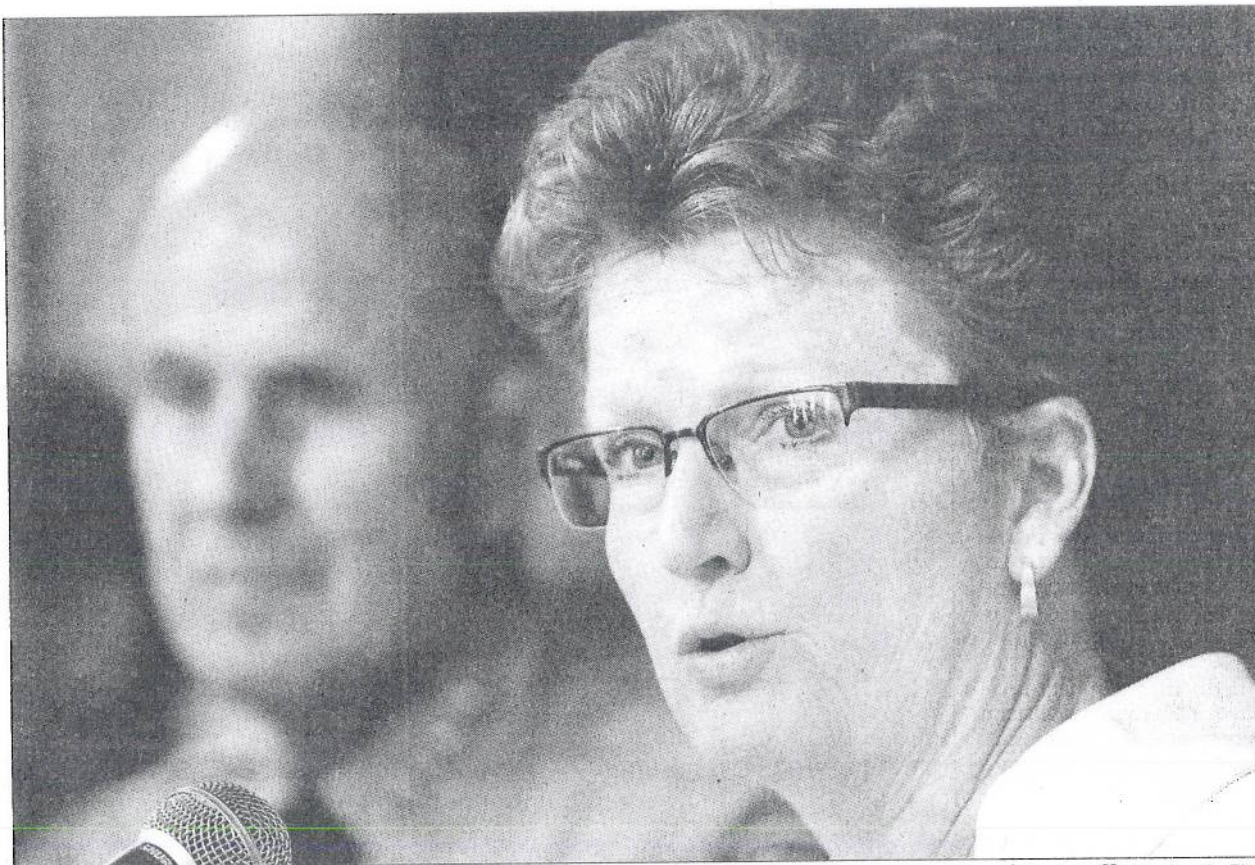
Law enforcement records revealed that the incident caused tensions in the Sheriff's Department. Sather's uncle angrily confronted the supervisor about making his nephew "beat up 'dings,'" slang for the mentally disabled. He then allegedly threatened to "put a bullet" in the supervisor's head.

Sheriff's officials launched an investigation and determined that an uncooperative inmate had been subdued by force but concluded that no misconduct had occurred. "The appropriate action was taken in this case, which was no action," said sheriff's spokesman Steve Whitmore.

In the second case, a man came to Men's Central Jail to visit his brother — an Army veteran — in July 2010. Leocadio Figueroa, 43, had gone to the lockup several times before to try to find his brother but "got the run-around each time," his attorney said. On his last visit, his attorney said, he told the deputies he wanted to see their supervisor.

That's when, according to Figueroa's lawsuit, a deputy lunged at him, knocked him to the ground and handcuffed him.

Figueroa alleged that while lying facedown on the ground, the deputies beat him. Even though he was

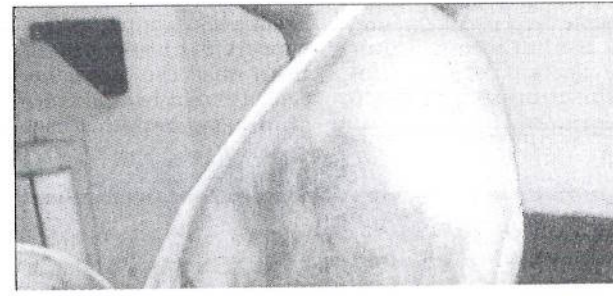


CHRISTINA HOUSE For The Times

FORMER STATE prison system official Terri McDonald will oversee Los Angeles County's jail system, the nation's largest. She endorsed the reforms recommended by a blue-ribbon panel examining jail violence.

quiet and not resisting, he said deputies ordered him to "Stop resisting! Stop resisting!" as they struck him.

His body was bruised, and his left arm was broken. Deputies arrested him for resisting but prosecutors never filed charges. A sheriff's spokesman said Figueroa was combative and the force used against him was



FORMER STATE prison system official Terri McDonald will oversee Los Angeles County's jail system, the nation's largest. She endorsed the reforms recommended by a blue-ribbon panel examining jail violence.

quiet and not resisting, he said deputies ordered him to "Stop resisting! Stop resisting!" as they struck him.

His body was bruised, and his left arm was broken. Deputies arrested him for resisting but prosecutors never filed charges. A sheriff's spokesman said Figueroa was combative and the force used against him was found to be within policy.

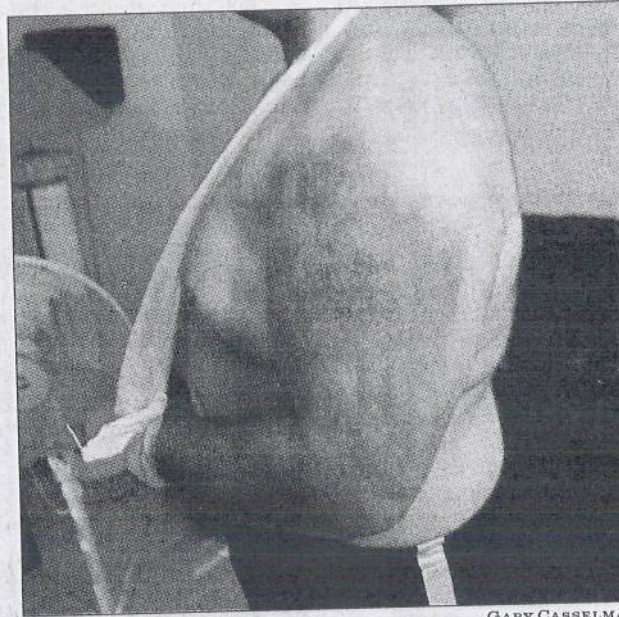
Figueroa's attorney, Gary Casselman, told The Times that late last year FBI agents interviewed Figueroa for several hours. He was then subpoenaed by a federal criminal grand jury investigating jailhouse abuse, and in January, he testified during the secret proceedings.

His case is the second alleged beating of a jailhouse visitor that had drawn the interest of federal authorities. The other visitor was also at the jail to see his brother but before he could he was detained by deputies who caught him with a cell-phone, a violation of jailhouse rules. He alleges he was then beaten and pep-



GARY CASSELMAN

LEOCADIO FIGUEROA, above and right, says he was the victim of a beating by deputies at Men's Central Jail. His arm was broken and his body bruised.



GARY CASSELMAN

per-sprayed while handcuffed.

In both cases, the supervisor was Eric Gonzalez — a sergeant who was put on leave for trading photos of bloodied suspects with another deputy. Investigators are trying to determine if the text messages were boasts.

Whitmore said the de-

partment has investigated the cases and welcomes further scrutiny from the FBI.

Laurie Levenson, a professor at Loyola Law School and a former federal prosecutor, said she's not surprised by the interest federal authorities have taken in cases that don't hinge on inmate witnesses.

"You want to use basically the most likable, believable witnesses," she said, "and inmates don't usually fit that bill."

An FBI spokeswoman declined to comment about the ongoing probe.

robert.faturechi
@latimes.com

Targeting health needs

Problems of girls in detention are often undiagnosed, untreated

BY ANNA GORMAN

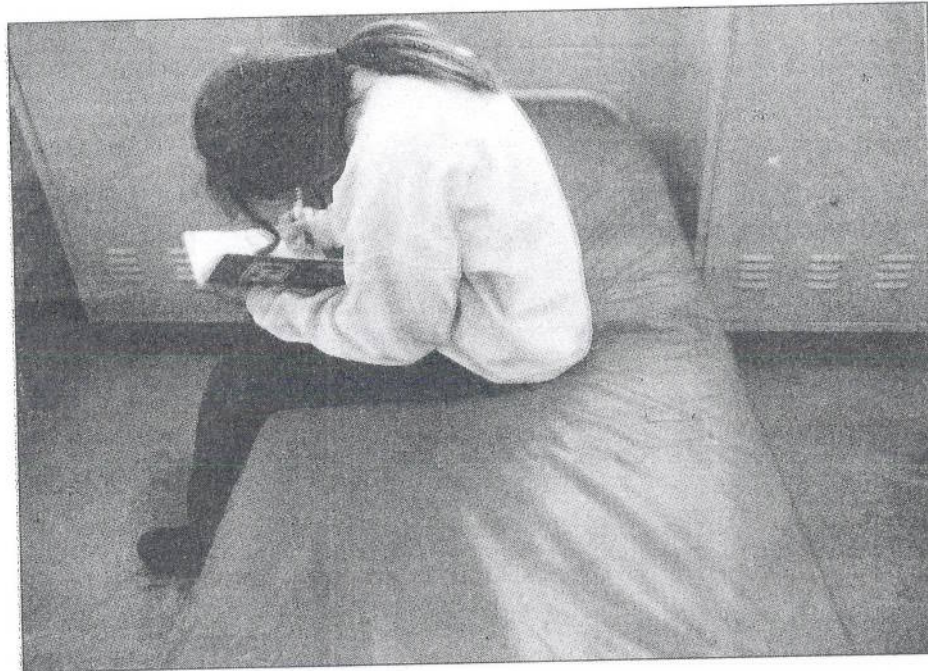
Latrice lifts the sleeve of her gray sweatshirt to reveal small, dark lines — scars from slicing her forearm over and over to drown out pain from years of sexual abuse. She says she was an alcoholic, dropped out of school in the eighth grade and got pregnant at 16.

Now 18, she is in Los Angeles County's juvenile justice system because she violated probation. Latrice says she has been locked up more than 20 times in four years. Petite and talkative, she has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and takes antidepressants.

Her health issues — and those of about 9,400 girls in juvenile detention centers around the nation — are serious and complex. Many of the girls don't have regular doctors, so their physical and emotional problems often go undiagnosed and untreated. That continues when they enter a system that was designed for boys and has been slow to adapt to girls.

"Their health needs are different; they are more severe and more complicated than boys'," said Catherine Gallagher, a George Mason University professor and an expert in juvenile justice. "They come in underserved.... They remain underserved."

More than one-third of girls in custody nationwide have a history of sexual abuse, compared with 8% of boys. Girls also have had more physical abuse, suicide attempts and drug-related problems, according to the federal Office of Juvenile Justice [See Girls, A32]



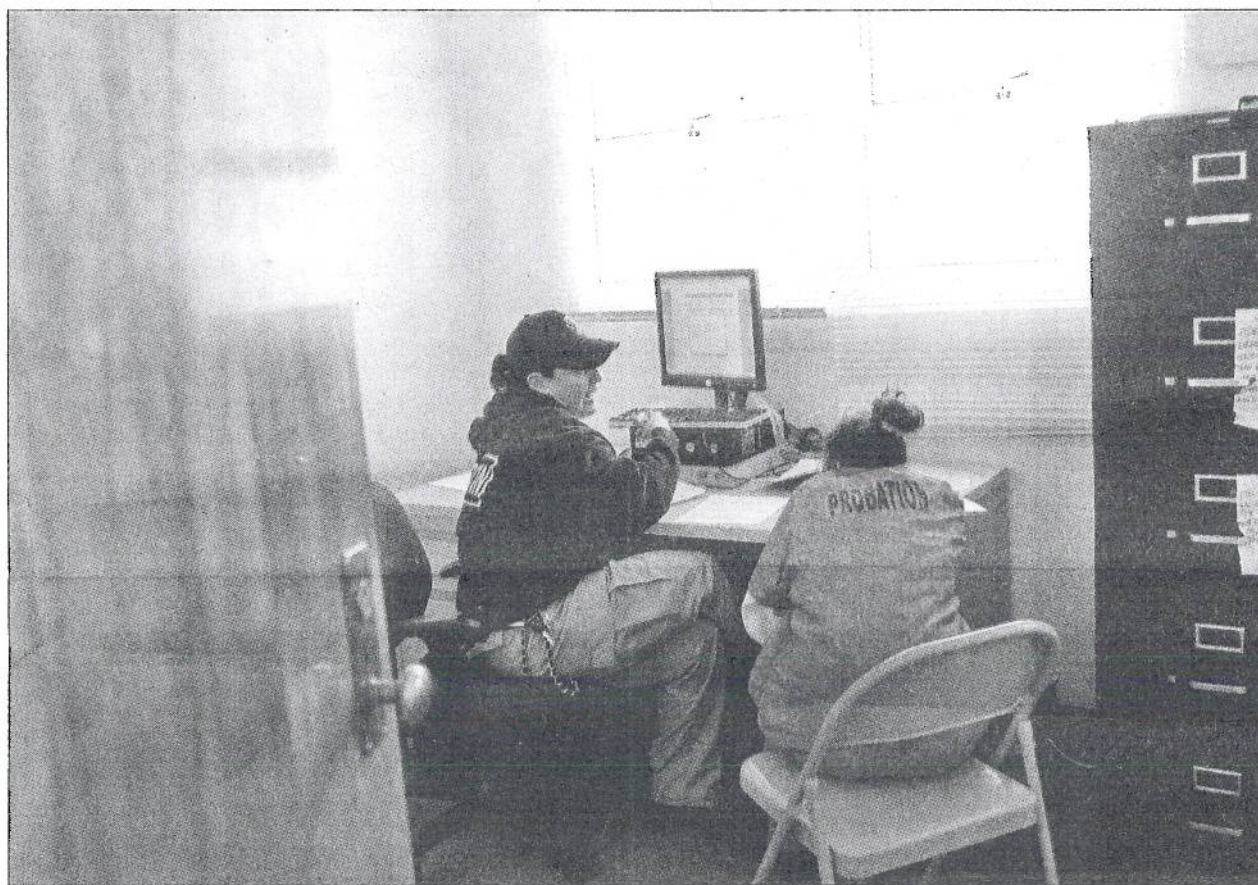
A GIRL writes in her journal on her bed at Camp Scudder. The camp's director says that many of the girls there have a history of trauma or victimization, and that the additional health screening helps pinpoint their immediate needs.

Targeting health needs of girls in detention

[Girls, from A31] and Delinquency Prevention. Few juvenile justice centers have shown they meet minimum healthcare standards, and girls are less likely than boys to get the care they need.

Research shows that many of their problems could be addressed if officials simply asked the right questions. But most detention center screeners are not health professionals and the questions are not designed for girls. Juvenile justice centers also don't usually request medical records because they know they have the youths for just weeks or months.

Los Angeles County health and probation officials recently began working to better identify and treat the health and mental health problems of about 240 girls in custody. They are using a tool called the Girls



BETHANY MOLLENKOF Los Angeles Times

A PROBATION OFFICER helps a new arrival fill out paperwork at Camp Scudder in Santa Clarita.

Health Screen, a 117-question survey designed by Leslie Acoca, president of the L.A.-based National Girls Health and Justice Institute.

"If we don't ask the questions, these girls' health needs are invisible," said Acoca, who added that her goals are to improve the girls' health and reduce the

odds of their re-arrest.

The screening program is being tested at Camp Scudder, a locked facility in Santa Clarita run by the L.A. County Probation Department. Director Pauline Starks said many of the girls, who spend between three and 12 months at camp, have a history of trauma or victimization. They are in the

juvenile justice system because of crimes such as robbery, assault, prostitution, vandalism and truancy.

"Our girls come to us with a lot of emotional issues, a lot of medical issues," she said. The additional screening "gives us a well-rounded picture of the girls and what we need to address immediately."

The Girls Health Screen

time," says Kristina, whose face is still gaunt.

In the past, she says, smoking marijuana helped her escape. Even though she sees a therapist at camp, Kristina says, "I can't really open my book and let her read it."

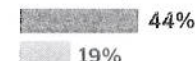
One recent afternoon, most of the 40 girls in detention — wearing matching collared pink and purple

Juvenile girls in custody

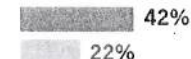
Girls in juvenile detention have more health issues than their male counterparts but often receive less treatment.

■ Female ■ Male

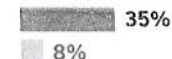
Has attempted suicide



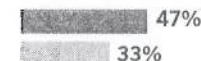
Has been physically abused



Has been sexually abused



Has used at least four or more listed substances*



Housed in facility that offers substance-abuse treatment



*List includes marijuana, cocaine/crack, Ecstasy, meth, heroin, inhalants or "other illegal drug"

Source: Survey of Justice in Youth Residential Placement, U.S. Dept. of Justice

Los Angeles Times

signal she needs immediate attention by a doctor or mental health counselor, but a few raise red flags, including a yes answer to the question, "Have you ever seen someone badly hurt or

questions are not designed for girls. Juvenile justice centers also don't usually request medical records because they know they have the youths for just weeks or months.

Los Angeles County health and probation officials recently began working to better identify and treat the health and mental health problems of about 240 girls in custody. They are using a tool called the Girls

A PROBATION OFFICER helps a new arrival fill out paperwork at Camp Scudder in Santa Clarita.

Health Screen, a 117-question survey designed by Leslie Acoca, president of the L.A.-based National Girls Health and Justice Institute.

"If we don't ask the questions, these girls' health needs are invisible," said Acoca, who added that her goals are to improve the girls' health and reduce the

odds of their re-arrest.

The screening program is being tested at Camp Scudder, a locked facility in Santa Clarita run by the L.A. County Probation Department. Director Pauline Starks said many of the girls, who spend between three and 12 months at camp, have a history of trauma or victimization. They are in the

juvenile justice system because of crimes such as robbery, assault, prostitution, vandalism and truancy.

"Our girls come to us with a lot of emotional issues, a lot of medical issues," she said. The additional screening "gives us a well-rounded picture of the girls and what we need to address immediately."

The Girls Health Screen is the first of its kind and targets an "extraordinarily vulnerable" population that has not had consistent healthcare, said Francine Sherman, who teaches juvenile justice at Boston College Law School.

Pregnancy is among the most common issues; about a third of girls entering juvenile facilities nationwide have been pregnant in the past month. The girls are being identified by their first or middle names under a court order allowing access into Camp Scudder.

One of the girls, Sam, has a 9-month-old baby and is expecting her second. She says both her parents used drugs and she was raised by their drug counselor. Sam, 17, has asthma, ADHD and depression. At home, she smoked marijuana and spent days sleeping. "I would cry out of nowhere," she says, adding that she didn't see a therapist until she got locked up.

Some of the health problems are linked to poverty. Kristina, 18, who committed an assault with a deadly weapon, says she weighed less than 100 pounds when she arrived and counselors assumed she was addicted to crack. She told them she was thin because her family couldn't afford enough food. She gained 15 pounds in two weeks. "I'm hungry all the

time," says Kristina, whose face is still gaunt.

In the past, she says, smoking marijuana helped her escape. Even though she sees a therapist at camp, Kristina says, "I can't really open my book and let her read it."

One recent afternoon, most of the 40 girls in detention — wearing matching collared pink and purple shirts and black pants — are in school on the camp's grounds.

A shuttle van pulls up and 14-year-old Marie, in shackles, steps out. Marie says she was in custody for using drugs and repeatedly running away from a group home. After explaining the rules, probation officer Katherine Russo asks Marie a few health questions, including if she is pregnant, has any serious injuries or is on any medication. Marie says no.

Then Russo hands her the Girls Health Screen to complete. Some of the questions address common problems such as earaches and food allergies. But many delve deeper: Have you ever cut or burned yourself on purpose? Has anyone ever made you have sex when you didn't want to? Do you have a place that you feel is safe to live when you get out of here?

Of the first 70 screened with the girls' questionnaire since July, 28 said they had witnessed traumatic injury or death, 15 had been pregnant and 26 had used marijuana in the last three months, Acoca said. Twenty-eight of the girls needed glasses but didn't have them.

Marie leans over the form and quickly circles her answers. None of her responses

*List includes marijuana, cocaine/crack, Ecstasy, meth, heroin, inhalants or "other illegal drug"

Source: Survey of Justice in Youth Residential Placement, U.S. Dept. of Justice

Los Angeles Times

signal she needs immediate attention by a doctor or mental health counselor, but a few raise red flags, including a yes answer to the question, "Have you ever seen someone badly hurt or killed in real life?"

All the girls receive an initial health evaluation at juvenile hall but aren't always forthcoming, said Raymond Perry, medical director of Juvenile Court Health Services.

"There are things we miss even when we ask," he said. "It's helpful to have another tool."

Even if officials do identify the health problems, however, the treatment they receive may not continue when they leave. The lack of electronic health records, and the fact that girls' Medical coverage is suspended while they are in detention, makes continuity difficult.

Probation, mental health and health officials said they are trying to better link the girls to care in the community. Acoca said she is finishing an electronic version of the health screen that could follow girls when they return home.

Tapping her leg nervously, Latrice says she hopes to keep seeing doctors and therapists when she is released from Camp Scudder. She knows her past is what got her in trouble and she wants to change her future; she wants to become a nurse.

"My daughter is my motivation," she says.

anna.gorman@latimes.com

1 Little
a.m.,

1.m.

17
atown

s Times

sa

L.A. COUNTY

Sun 3-17-13
Daily Breeze

Sheriff patrols may be restored

By Christina Villacorte
christina.villacorte@
dailynews.com
@LADNVillacorte on Twitter

Sheriff Lee Baca could get \$22 million to restore patrols he had removed from unincorporated areas because of budget cuts.

County Chief Executive Officer William Fujioka is scheduled to ask the Board of Supervisors for the additional appropriation Tuesday.

The request comes a few weeks after an audit revealed that residents in unincorporated areas have to wait an average of 17 percent longer — about an extra minute — for sheriff's deputies to respond to their 911 calls, compared with those in cities and agencies that have contracts with the Sheriff's Department.

Outraged over the delays, Supervisor Gloria Molina had

accused Baca during a tense board meeting of "stealing" resources from unincorporated areas to meet his contractual obligations.

Baca responded by pulling dozens of deputies out of gang enforcement and other units to patrol unincorporated areas.

His spokesman, Steve Whitmore, said the \$22 million appropriation would enable the sheriff to restore the patrols without compromising gang enforcement and other functions.

"This money is important because it will re-establish the level of patrols in the unincorporated area, which is what the board wants, and which the audit indicated was necessary," Whitmore said.

He added the sheriff "will no longer be forced to rob

PATROLS » PAGE 5

Sun 3-17-13

Patrols

Daily Breeze
FROM PAGE 3

Peter to pay Paul" because the extra cash will "make it much easier to maintain patrols to the level that everyone wants."

Baca reduced the patrols around the beginning of this year because the Sheriff's Department endured deep budget cuts while incurring what Fujioka called "unavoidable cost increases in employee benefits."

Whitmore said the department has seen its budget slashed \$128 million, \$96 million and \$140 million over the last three years.

Fujioka said \$22 million could be put back into the department's coffers from the county's "provisional financing uses" budget.

In her audit, Auditor Controller Wendy Watanabe reported that deputies' average response to an emergency call in unincorporated areas was 5.8 minutes, compared to 4.8 minutes in contract cities and agencies.

Finally, a jail plan

WED 3-20-13 LA TIMES

THE LOS ANGELES County Board of Supervisors has spent the better part of the last decade debating what to do when they close Men's Central Jail, an aging facility near Union Station that was once described by a federal judge as "not consistent with human values." The supervisors have argued over whether to build new jails to replace it or whether to refurbish existing ones and expand their capacity. Because they've failed to decide, Men's Central has remained open far longer than it should have.

Last year, for example, the board rightfully voted down a proposal by Sheriff Lee Baca and the county's chief executive, William T. Fujioka, to spend \$14 billion to build two new jails and refurbish a third, arguing that it wasn't clear whether such a plan would really address the county's needs.

On Tuesday, the supervisors tabled yet another proposal by Baca asking for \$900 million for a new jail, and instead did what they should have done a long time ago. They voted to undertake a comprehensive study to determine exactly what the county's real

jail needs will be going forward. The report will provide a baseline of information including a profile of the existing inmate population, a "trend analysis" that projects the needs for bed space in the coming decade based on security classification, as well as a description of existing facilities and bed capacity.

Right now, amazingly enough, neither the supervisors nor Baca has a firm grasp on which inmates in the jails need to remain locked up and which ones pose no risk and can be released. Frankly, it's hard to imagine how the county can develop a rational jail plan without this information.

The report won't resolve all of the issues surrounding the jails. The courts will still have to sign off on alternatives to incarceration for low-level pre-trial detainees who pose no public safety risk but cannot make bail.

No one disputes that Men's Central Jail should be closed. But before the county decides to ask taxpayers to spend nearly \$1 billion to build new jails, it should know exactly what it needs.